

County Commissioners Judith L. Schwank, Timothy A. Reiver and Mark C. Scott have spent \$19,353 on legal fees alone. That does not include the

trying to determine how much it will cost to implement Baylson's order, issued in response to the suit filed against the county by the Department of

ally. His estimate includes wages for a bilingual manager to implement the order and translate election materials into

yet," she said. "We need to review this and outline what the costs will be." Reiver said he wasn't sure Bellman's estimate would be

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March 20, 03 Reading Eagle



Reading Eagle: Matthew J. Sroka

Mitch Cron, remedial project manager for the Environmental Protection Agency, explains the cancer risk posed by a contaminant found in Bally water.

## Company in Bally supplies water

American Household Inc., which has taken responsibility for contamination in the public supply, is buying bottled water for customers in the borough.

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By Robin Huiras  
Reading Eagle

A Bally company that has taken responsibility for contamination in the public water supply will offer bottled drinking water to customers until another municipal water source can be found.

At public meetings Wednesday, residents learned that Bally's only water source became contaminated with the solvent 1,4-dioxane, a probable cancer-causing agent. The chemical was detected in Bally's wells in February.

Federal officials have stressed there is no immediate health threat but said there is concern about long-term exposure to the chemical.

Officials from the federal Environmental Protection Agency told residents at the Bally Firehouse that American Household Inc., which owns the manufacturing site formerly known as Sunbeam Corp. and Bally Engineered Structures, would supply 2,000 municipal water customers with free bottled water.



Reading Eagle: Matthew J. Sroka

Melissa D. Fronhelsner and Connor G. Dunn, second-graders at St. Francis Academy in Bally, drink bottled water instead of borough water, which was discovered to contain a contaminant.

Water already has been delivered to St. Francis Academy, a Catholic grade school in the borough, and to Washington Elementary School along Route 100 in Washington Township.

The service will be provided until a new water source is found, which could take six to 12 months, said Frank Lenzo of Arcadis Innovative Strategies Group, an engineering firm working with American Household to remedy the water problem.

That could involve installing a new well at a site that has yet to be determined, Lenzo said.

Although bottled water will be avail-

able, the contamination is not so severe that it is essential to drink bottled water, the EPA said.

Mitch Cron, remedial project manager for the EPA, said there are no federal or state standards for acceptable levels of 1,4-dioxane, but that the EPA would consider levels of 600 parts per billion an immediate health threat.

Two tests in February showed that levels in Bally were between 20 and 50 parts per billion, Cron said.

"It's the EPA's position that based upon

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## He's hitting the trail to fight cancer



Joseph N. Farrell

WITH HER LIVING ROOM

miles, by Columbus Day.

His mother would prefer if he took a cell phone, but Cliff, 45, who's been backpacking since he was 10, cringes at the thought.

This will not be his first end-to-end trek on the trail — 25 years ago, Cliff and his best friend, Andy Hilt, who'd both been introduced to backpacking by Richard

Writing to friends and family, going door-to-door in Greenfields, tapping into his buddies at the Clover Park Athletic Club, Cliff has been seeking pledges for the American Cancer Society.

Cancer killed his father, Richard Weinhold, in 1994, and a lifelong family friend, Laureldale jeweler Ted Rapp, two years ago, and Cliff says he

### How to help

Contributions to Cliff Weinhold's Hike for Life can be made out to the Berks County Chapter of the American Cancer Society, 498 Bellevue Ave., Reading, PA 19605, with Hike for Life noted on the envelope and the check.

Information on hiking the

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Bee a success!

### ol District

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### nty Spelling Bee top 10 winners

- NER: James W. Derr, Grade 8,  
Wilson School District
- NER-UP: Nathaniel MacArthur, Grade 6,  
Berks Christian School
- D: Thomas D. Naugle, Grade 7,  
Wilson School District
- TH: Michael Wellock, Grade 7,  
Wyomissing Area School District
- : Joshua Campfield, Grade 7,  
Conrad Weiser School District
- : Abby Engel, Grade 7,  
Conrad Weiser School District
- TH: Cameron J. Gettel, Grade 8,  
Tulpehocken Area School District
- H: Priscilla Brownlow, Grade 8,  
Twin Valley School District
- i: Megan Gribb, Grade 7,  
Exeter Township School District
- i: Jeff Smith, Grade 8,  
St. Ignatius Loyola School

### ORS

Dictionary and its Addenda Section

\$100 U.S. Savings Bond

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nty students!

Davis will start March 31.

**Comment:** Council President Walter A. Spatz said Davis will be paid about \$12 an hour.

Davis said that one of his responsibilities will be the borough water system, for which he will seek certification by the state Department of Environmental Protection.

**Other:** Councilman Bradley S. Reinert said work has begun to add new sewer inlets to prevent water freezing on Nichols Street.

The work should be completed by early April, Reinert said. Low bidder LSR Enterprises, Leesport, is being paid \$64,470 for the work.

**Other:** Council voted 7-0 to approve contracts for:

■ Daniel Brennan Jr., Shoemakersville, at \$8,550 for grass cutting in 2003.

■ Albright Construction, Leesport, at \$4,480 to repair a street light in the 400 block of Grant Avenue.

or were absent.

**Closed session:** The board discussed personnel matters. No details were available.

— By David Carroll

### Conrad Weiser schools

**Action:** The Conrad Weiser School Board voted 9-0 Wednesday night to approve the recommendation of the local tax study commission not to pursue Act 50 — the Homestead Act, which takes some of the property-tax burden off homeowners by increasing earned income taxes.

**Background:** On Jan. 8, the panel that was appointed by the school board to investigate the issue, voted not to pursue the matter, saying it would be a poor move for district residents.

The committee based its decision on findings which indicated:

■ Any household earning more than \$39,000 would end

ter at Berks Career and Technology Board meetings.

The BCTC approves a calendar with a pre-Labor Day start that most districts use as a guide so that career and technology students do not miss any classes.

■ 9-0 to approve the Berks County Intermediate Unit's 2003-2004 \$588,500 budget with Conrad Weiser's share at \$25,900. The spending amount is no change from this year.

■ 7-2 to approve the leasing of two modular classroom units for 15 months at a cost of \$37,540 for the middle school renovation project.

Bohne and Seidel cast dissenting votes.

■ 9-0 to authorize the refinancing of the 1999 bond issue in the amount of \$4.2 million. The district expects to save a minimum of \$154,000.

— By David A. Kostival

## WATER | Bally company gives residents bottles

Continued from B1

our data and concentration levels, that these concentration levels do not present an immediate threat to health," he said. "We're not concerned about days, weeks or months of exposure. We're concerned about years of exposure."

But potentially hundreds of Bally residents fall into that category of long-term exposure, said residents at a Wednesday afternoon session.

"One of the alarming things is there does seem to be a higher incidence of cancer in this vicinity, in the Pottstown and Boyertown area," said Robert Gerhart, a 15-year Bally resident. "Even in Bally, there seem to be numerous cases of cancer. It seems to be off kilter for a borough of this size."

Tom Stukas of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry said a cancer cluster test was completed in 1983.

"At that time, there was no difference from Bally to other areas for rates of cancer," Stukas said. "If there was really something going on, you would see a blip that would show up if people were being exposed."

Gerhart, who is also pastor of

the Hereford Mennonite Church, said he will be signing up to get bottled water delivered to the church as well as his home.

"If it was just for one year, we wouldn't be concerned, but we've been accumulating for 15 years," Gerhart said.

Because the technology to test for 1,4-dioxane was developed only last year, it is unclear how long the agent has been in the water supply, Cron said.

During the 1980s, a contaminant known as trichloroethane, or TCA, was found in Bally's water, and it's believed that dioxane ties into the presence of TCA, Cron said.

While TCA is removed by air strippers used to treat Bally water, the system does not work for dioxane, Cron said.

Further, boiling water or filtering water with commercial devices would have no effect on the agent, he said.

Cron said several tests for dioxane in private wells outside the borough have come back negative, leading environmental officials to believe that water contamination by the chemical is limited to the municipal well.

■ Contact reporter Robin Huiras at 610-371-5037 or rhuiras@readingeagle.com.

### About dioxane

The solvent 1,4-dioxane is used as a degreasing agent and as a stabilizer for more volatile chlorinated solvents, such as trichloroethane. It is used in the manufacture and extraction of fats, oils, waxes and resins, and in the pulping of wood. It may be present in household products such as paint, varnish and degreasers.

#### Potential health effects

The EPA classifies 1,4-dioxane as a probable human carcinogen based on studies that show it can cause cancer in animals. In those tests, nasal tumors were most commonly found. But levels found in Bally, 20 to 50 parts per billion, were well below the level EPA would consider an imminent health threat.

#### What you can do

American Household Inc., the company that treats the municipal water supply in Bally, has offered to provide free bottled water to Bally water customers who may have concerns. The program, which is voluntary, also applies to homes in Washington Township that are served by Bally water.

To establish delivery, contact Deer Park at 1-800-950-9907. Businesses with drinking water needs can contact Bally Borough Manager Toni Hemerka at 610-845-2351.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency